

*he Clergy of the Church of
England Vindicated,*

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Metropolitan Church

O F

Christ, Canterbury,

On Tuesday, May 16. 1710.

By *J O H N L E W I S*,
Minister of Margate.

L O N D O N:

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R E A D E R.

TH E following SERMON had neither been Preach'd nor Publish'd, had not the Author thought there had been great Occasion for it. But he is one of those who thinks that he does not act the part of a Minister of Jesus Christ, in being silent when the *Office* he is in is so very rudely and violently attacked. He expects indeed not to escape without some Reflections. The SERMON may perhaps in the witty way of the *second Defender of the Rights*, &c. be styl'd a *Pulpit Blunderbuss*; or He himself in the more courtly and mannerly way of the Author of *the Case of Liturgies reviewed*, be represented as *seditionously bellowing out his Complaints*. But the Author declares, 'twas none of his design

The Publisher to the Reader.

sign to encrease the unhappy ferment that is now in the Kingdom, but rather, if possible, to lay it, by shewing, that the Clergy of the *English* Church are not such Tools and Villains as their Enemies industriously represent them to be. He owns indeed, that he had said nothing of the Doctrine of *Non-resistance*, had he not found the Clergy so very heavily loaded and calumniated on account of it, because he is sensible, that at this time a great many are apt to construe whatever is said on that Head as designed against the late *Happy Revolution*: But the Author declares he had no such design, and therefore desires the Reader to observe, that he has neither *defended* nor *spoken against* the Doctrine of *Non-resistance*, but only shewn, that the Clergy of this Church are unjustly charg'd with being the *Teachers* of it, so as designing thereby to introduce Tyranny and Arbitrary Power. To conclude, the Author would be glad to see Men's Jealousies and Fears laid, and that instead of meddling with things that we have nothing to do with, we would study to be quiet, and mind our own Business.

A

SERMON, &c.

1 COR. IV. 13.

Being defamed we intreat : We are made as the filth of the World, the off-scouring of all things unto this day.

TIS what was foretold by way of Caution to his Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ, that they should be * *battered of all Men, be reviled and evil spoken of falsely for his Name's sake.* And this was what they very often experienc'd the Truth of. They were represented as a parcel of Men, who, wherever they came, *turn'd the World upside down*, as exceedingly troubling every place they came into ; and teaching Customs which were not lawful to be receiv'd and observ'd. In short, they, as the Religion they were the Ministers of, were † *every where spoken a-*

* Mat. 10. 22. Mat. 5. 11. † Acts 28. 22. 1 Cor. 4. 12.

gainst

gainst: They were *reviled, persecuted, defamed, made as the Filth of the World, the refuse and off-scouring of all things.* And all this ill Treatment was owing to the Doctrine they taught; a Doctrine directly contrary to Flesh and Blood, that struck at the Lusts and Passions of Men, that taught them to ** crucifie the Flesh, to mortifie the Deeds of the Body, to endure the Cross, to despise the Shame, to deny themselves, and bring every thought and imagination into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ.*

'Tis indeed no wonder, that considering all this, the Men who thus preached should be hated of all Men, and look'd on as those who were for unsettling things where-ever they came. 'Tis an unpleasing and unwelcome Task to encounter the darling Lusts and favourite Prejudices of Mankind: Men are but too apt to take those for their Enemies, who will be so plain and honest as to tell them the Truth.

And all this the Apostles were very sensible of, and accordingly were arm'd and prepar'd for the worst they could on this Account meet with. *Being reviled, they blest'd, being persecuted, they suffer'd, being defamed, they entreated.* They did all they could to remove the Prejudices conceived against them, and to cause Men to entertain a juster and better Opinion of them. For that they knew that the Religion they taught would suffer by the reproach which they underwent. If they were thought ill of, and had a mean and despicable Opinion conceiv'd of them, their Doctrines would not be thought very well of, nor be very highly esteem'd.

* Gal. 5. 24. Rom. 8. 13. Mat. 16. 24. 2 Cor. 10. 5.

The Enemies of our Holy Religion are well aware of this, and 'tis for that very reason that their Forces are directed against the Christian Priesthood, and all the succours of an envenom'd Spite and malicious Wit are call'd in on the occasion. They know very well that those *Mysteries* they are such Enemies to, won't long preserve their Credit after the *Stewards* of them come to be believed to be *unfaithful* and *corrupted*. That that *Gospel of Reconciliation* won't be much regarded when the *Ambassadors* and *Ministers* of it are become as despicable and nauseous as the filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all things.

'Tis not therefore on our own Account that when we are defamed, we entreat ; we can for our own parts *suffer Fools gladly*, and *rejoyce that we are counted worthy* to bear such Reproach on so good an Account. But we are not insensible that the reason of our being thus treated is, that the *way of Truth may be evil spoken of* ; and they who now hold and embrace it may be perverted and set against it : We own indeed that we * *speak like Fools* in commending our selves, but you see that we are compelled to it ; Besides, that 'tis our Duty to † *magnifie our Office*, not to suffer that to be debased and vilified.

Many have been the Attempts of these late Years to blacken and destroy the Reputation of the *English* Clergy. They have been represented by their Enemies as affecting the same Power, and contending for the same

* 2 Cor. 11. 17. † Rom. 11. 13.

* Indepen-

* Independency with that which the Popish Clergy affect and desire. But, not contented with

** That the Reader may see what that Independency is which the English Clergy lay claim to, I beg leave to transcribe their own Words as set down in The Institution of a Christian Man, subscrib'd to by them, and published by the King's Authority, M.D. XXXVII. All bysshoppes and preachers shall instruct and teche the people, committed unto their spirituall charge, fyrste, howe that Chyriste and his aposteles dyd institute and ordeyne in the newe testament, that besydes the civile powers and governance of kynges and princis (whiche is called Potestas gladii the power of the swerde) there shulde also be continually in the church militant certayne other mynysters or officers whiche shulde have speciall power, auctoritie and commission under Chyriste to preache and teche the word of God unto his people. to dyspense and admynyster the sacramentes of God unto them, and by the same to conferre and gyve the graces of the holy geosfte. to consecrate the blessed bodye of Chyriste in the sacramente of the aulter. to loose and absolve from synne all persones, whiche be duly penitent and sorre for the same. to bynde and to excommunicate suche as be gyltie in manifeste crymes and synnes, and wylle not amende theyr defaultes. to ordeyne and consecrate others in the same rone, order, and offyce, whereunto they be called, and admitted themselves. and fynally to fede Chyristis people lyke good pastours and reitours (as the apostele calleth them) with their holysome doctrine ——— That this offyce, this power, and auctoritie, was committed and gyven by Chyriste and his apostelles, unto certayne persons only, that is to say, unto priestes or byshops whom they*

this, the whole Order has been struck at, and the Christian Priesthood in general, insinuated to be a needless Order and Institution and what the Christian Church may well enough be without. At first indeed these Reflections were made slyly, and in the dark ; but of late the Authors of them have learnt to speak out plainly, and without reserve. Inasmuch that it may be truly affirm'd, that in a Christian Country, and under a Christian Government,

they dyd electe, calle, and admytte theréunto, by their prayer, and imposition of their handes. — That the Jurisdiction commytted unto priestes and byshops by thautozite of goddis lawe, consisteth in thre special pointes.

The fyrste is to rebuke and repzehend sinne; and to excommunicate the manifeste and obstinate sinners, that is to say to separate, exclude and repelle from the communion and perception of the sacramentes, and to reject and cast out of the congregation and company of Christs people such persons, as have manifestly committed mortal synne, and doo obstinately perseuer in the same; and to absoyle and receyue them ageyne, whan so ever they shall retorne unto the churche by condigne penance —

The seconde poynte — is to approue and admytte suche persones, as (beinge nominated, elected, and presented unto them to exerceyse thoffice and some of preacheinge the gospel) shall be thought unto them mete and worthy to exerceyse the same; and to rejecte and repelle from the sayde rounge suche as they shall judge to be unmete therefore.

ment, never was the Christian Priesthood assaulted in a more violent, malicious and publick manner. But the Spirit of *Apostacy* has always been observ'd to be most bitter and cruel ; and therefore the Christian Religion was observed to be more deeply wounded, and more severely reproach'd by *Julian* than by any of its profess'd Enemies and Opposers that were Heathens.

One

The thyrde poynt. — is to make and ordeyne certayne rules or canons concernynge holy days, fastynge days, the maner and ceremonies to be used in the mynystration of the sacraments, the manner of syngynge the psalms and spirituall hymnes, (as saynte paule calleth theym) the diversitie of degrees amaine the ministers, and the maner of their ornaments, and finally concernynge suche other rites, ceremonies and obseruances, as do tende and conduce to the preservation of quietnes and decent order to be had and used among the people, when they shall be assembled together in the temple. — that the christen princis dyd also gyve unto priestes and byshops further power and jurisdiction in certayne other tempozal and civile matters, lyke as by the lawes, statutes, immunities, pryviledges, and grauntes of princis made in that behalfe, and by the uses also and customes of sundry realmes and regions it doth manifestly appere. . And therefore it was, and shall be always lesfull unto the sayd kinges and princis, and theyr successours, with the consent of theyr parlyamentes, to reboke and call agayne into theyr owne handes or otherwyse to restrain all the power and jurisdiction, whiche was gyven and assigned unto priestes and byshoppes by the

One would indeed hope, that in a Kingdom and Country where Christianity is establish'd by the known Laws, and where Kings and Queens are the Nursing Fathers and Mothers of it, there should be no need of any Defences and Apologies of this Nature. One would hope that the Christian Priesthood should be Honour'd and Reverenc'd, and all Attempts to vilifie and bring it into disgrace should, by the publick Authority,

the lycence, consent, sufferance, and auctoritie of the sayde kynges and princis, and not by thauatoritie of god and his gospel : whan so euer they shall have such groundes and causes so to do, as shall be necessary holsome, and expedient for the wele of theyr realmes, the repressynge of vice, and thencecrease of Christis faith and religion. — which notwithstanding we maye not thynke, that it doth apperteyne unto thosce of kynges and princis, to preache and teache, to admynistre the sacramentes, to absolve, to excommunicate, and suche other thynges belongynge to thosce and admynistration of byshops and priestes : but we must thynke and beleve that God hath constituted and made christen kyngs and princis, to be as the chief heedes and overlookers over the saide priestes and byshoppes, to cause them to administer theyr office and power committed unto them, purely and sincerely. and in case they shall be neglygent in any parte thereof, to cause them to supplie and repaire the same ageyne. And god hathe also commanded the sayde priestes and bishoppes, to obey with all humbleness and reberence, al the lawes made by the said princis, beinge not contrarie to the lawes of god, whatsoeuer they be : and that not onely propter iram, but also propter conscientiam.

be quash'd and silenc'd. But when * *the most important Truths of Christianity are attack'd with Insolence and great Rudeness, and its Ordinances all decry'd by every petulant and idle Writer, the Ministers of Religion have no reason to wonder that so huge Contempt is pour'd daily on them, that they have trials of cruel Mockings, and are as it were destitute and afflicted.*

Since then that things are so, that the Christian Priesthood is thus *defamed*, that our Holy Religion is by this means abused, and the Professors of it tempted to make Shipwrack of their Holy Faith; I hope it will not be offensive if we do *entreat*, and when we thus suffer Reproach, vindicate our selves, and *magnifie our Office.*

The main things that the Clergy of this Church have been accus'd of are,

First, That they assume to themselves the Name of the Church, which, it's said, properly belongs to the People, and thereby Lord it over God's Heritage.

Secondly, They have been accused as a self-interested, designing body of Men, who make a gain of Godliness, and have invented Doctrines for their own Advantage.

Thirdly, They have been defamed as Enemies to the Liberty of the People, and preaching up and teaching Arbitrary Power and Slavery.

Fourthly. They have been accus'd of being utterly against a Toleration of those who differ from them in matters of Religion.

* Vide a Sermon preached before the Queen at St. Paul's, Aug. 19. 1708. By William Lord Bishop of St. Asaph:

First,

First, The Clergy of this Church are represented as assuming to themselves the Name of the Church. In answer to which 'tis false in Fact, that we do assume to our selves the Name of the Church in Distinction from or without the People: As they who accuse us of this, affirm that the Church is properly the People without any appropriated among them to minister in Holy Things. An Assertion not only contrary to the Holy Scriptures, but to all the Ancient Christian Writers. We acknowledge that the true Notion of a Christian Church is, that 'tis a *Congregation of Faithful Men*, of such as believe in Jesus Christ. But then we affirm too that 'tis such a Congregation of Faithful Men, as has in it *the pure Word of God preached, and the Sacraments duly administered*; which we do affirm cannot be done but by those *who are lawfully called to this Office and Administration, and sent to execute the same*. We own indeed that *all the Lords People are Holy*, that they are called with an *Holy Calling*, but that they take too much upon them, when they presume, on their own Heads, to minister for others in things pertaining unto God. The Apostle expressly declares that God has set *some* in the Church, not *all*, to be *Prophets and Teachers*, and therefore concludes that *all* who are Christians, or belong to the Christian Church are not * *Teachers*. Nothing can well be more express than that among Christians, † *some* are set over others by the Lord; That these are to || *have the rule over them whom they are set over*; ‡ *That they are to watch for their Souls*; * *to speak to them the Word of God*;

* 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29. Eph. 4. 11. † 1 Thes. 5. 12. || Heb. 13. 7. ‡ Heb. 13. 17. * Heb. 13. 7.

* to labour in the Word and Doctrine; † to reprove, rebuke and exhort; Nay || to speak, exhort, and rebuke with all Authority; and to stop the Mouths of unruly and vain Talkers, and Deceivers. To these thus given for the work of the Ministry, Christians are required ‡ to submit themselves; to acknowledge and own them as their Superiours, who labour among them, to esteem them very highly, and to obey and submit themselves to them. Nothing sure can be more plainly intimated by all this, than that Christ has invested a Power and Authority in some of the Members of his Church over the rest. And that therefore they who are thus raised to a Superiority over the rest of their fellow Christians, do not lord it over God's Heritage, in executing that Power and Authority they are invested with.

But it has been urg'd, that all these Expressions in the sacred Writings relate only to the Apostles, and first Teachers of Christianity, and that therefore they are wrongfully and misapplied to the present Ministers of Religion.

But this seems to be said without any Proof, since besides that our Lord's Promise of being with his Apostles, * *always even unto the end of the World*, cannot be verified without supposing them to have some to succeed them in the work of the Ministry. To what purpose are others besides the Apostles ordain'd to the Ministry of the Saints? However can any reason be given why Timothy and Titus, are ordered † to *commit the things they had heard from the Apostles, to Faith-*

* 1 Tim. 4. 17. † 2 Tim. 4. 2. || Tit. 2. 15. 1. 10, 11. ‡ 1 Cor. 16. 16. 1 Thes. 5. 12 Heb. 13. 17. * vid. Bp. Stillingfleet's Irenicum. pt. 2d. Cap. 2. † 2 Tim. 2. 2. Titus 1. 5.

ful Men who should be able to teach others also; and to ordain elders in every City, if none were to be employed after the Apostles in the Work of the Ministry?

It has been said this was to plant the Gospel, and lay the Foundation of Christianity, but that after that was done, there was no need of a particular order of Men to preach it, and instruct Men in the Knowledge of it. But it ought to be remembred, that God's setting some in the Church to be Pastors and Teachers, was for the edifying or building it up, not barely laying its Foundation. Nay it's expressly said to be * *for the perfecting of the Saints, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ.* And therefore the business of these Pastors and Teachers is declared to be not only to teach what was not known before, but to † put Men in remembrance of what they knew already, to Admonish, Rebuke, and Exhort.

Besides, let it be consider'd whether the arguing of the Apostle with the || *Corinthians* will not hold now as well as then. There seems to've been some in that Church, who thought themselves under no manner of Obligation to submit themselves to any one, as being all *Spiritual*, and on that account *Equal* to even the *Apostle* himself. To these our Apostle replies, That the Christian Church is one Body, having many Members belonging to it, that it was not one Member, but many. And that God hath set these Members, every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased

* *Eph.* 4. 12. 13. † *2 Pet.* 1. 12. || *1 Cor.* 12.

Him. Some were *Eyes* and *Hands*, others *Ears* and *Feet*; some were *Pastors* and *Teachers*, others were *not* so, and that if they were, *all* one Member, there would be *no body*. May not the same be said now? You that say *all the Lord's People are Holy*, and accordingly murmur against the Christian Priesthood, as taking too much upon it, are you not Members in particular of the Body of Christ? and because you are not an Eye, or an Hand, have you therefore any just reason to Complain? If the whole Body were an *Eye* as you seem to think it ought to be, where were the Hearing? If *all* are *Teachers* and *Governours*, where are they who are to be taught and govern'd? This is therefore to make a Monster of the Body of Christ, and to alter that order and disposition which God has been pleased to be the Author of.

As to the matter of Fact, nothing can be more plain than that there never was a Christian Church without its *Pastors* and *Teachers*. * *St. Clement* of *Rome* assures us that the Apostles ordain'd the first Fruits of those who were converted to Christianity by their Preaching the Word, to be the Bishops and Ministers of those who should afterward believe. † *Ignatius* is very express that, that is not called a Church which is without Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. And *St. Jerom* de-

* Κατὰ χώρας οὖν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες, καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν. δοκιμάζοντες τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους οὗς μέλλοντων πσεύειν. ad Corint. Epist. C. 41. edit. Colomes. Lond. 1694

† Χωρὶς τῶν ἐκκλησία εἰ καλεῖται. Epist. ad Trallianos Cap. 3. edit. Cleric. Antwerp. 1700.

clares, * That that is not a Church which has not Priests belonging to it. To these and many other like Authorities from the Ancients has lately been oppos'd one single Passage out of *Tertullian*, † that where there are three, though they are Laicks, there is a Church. But besides that the very term Laicks supposes that there were *Clerici* or Clergy; the same Father in the very same Place distinguishes between *Ordo* and *Plebs*, the Clergy and People.

In which Words *Tertullian* contends, that the Common Priesthood of all Christians is of one and the same kind with the publick Priesthood of the Christian Church, and is accordingly to be refer'd to the same Publick Offices of the Church. But

* *Ecclesia non est quæ non habet sacerdotes. Adv. Luci. p. 195. edit. Par. 1601.*

St. Cyprian's definition of the Christian Church is, plebs sacerdoti adunata, & pastori suo grex adherens, Ep. 66. Edit. Oxon.

Irenæus speaks of Bishops being in the Church ever since the Christian Church has been. - Habemus annumerare eos qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis, & successores eorum usque ad nos, Lib 2. cap. 3. and Tertullian in his Book de præscript. c. 32. challenges the Hereticks, Edant ergo origines Ecclesiarum suarum, evolvant ordinem episcoporum suorum, ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Episcopus aliquem ex Apostolis, vel Apostolicis viris——habuerit auctorem & antecessorem. Hoc enim modo Ecclesiæ.

† *The whole passage in Tertullian is Differentiam inter Ordinem & plebem constituit Ecclesiæ auctoritas, & honor per Ordinis confessum sanctificatus, adeo ubi Ecclesiastici Ordinis non est confessus, & offers & tinguis & sacerdos es tibi solus, sed tibi tres, Ecclesia est, licet laici. De Exhortat. Castità. 4. 7. edit. Par. 1664.*

as he was *singular* in this Opinion of his, so it may be observ'd, First, That he allows a difference in the Christian Church betwixt the Clergy and the People. Secondly, That whatever right every private Christian may have to perform the Sacred Offices of the Priesthood, he ought not to exercise this right, unless it be where there are no Priests. These are his Words, *Igitur si habes Jus sacerdotis in temetipso, ubi necesse est, babeas oportet etiam Disciplinam sacerdotis, ubi necesse sit habere jus sacerdotis.* But indeed this Opinion of his, as it is contrary to the sense of the Scriptures and the Catholick Church, so the reason he gives for it is very weak and mean, *Unusquisq; enim sua fide vivit, nec est personarum acceptio, &c.* 'For every one lives by his own Faith, neither is there respect of Persons with God; for not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers of it, shall be justified before God, as the Apostle says. The force of which Argument is this, God is no respecter of Persons, therefore 'tis no matter who executes the Priestly Office, a Laick being accepted by God, if a Doer of the Law, whereas a Clergyman is not accepted if he be only a Hearer: But if this reasoning be good, all Distinctions whatsoever must be laid aside, and the Prince upon the Throne have no difference made betwixt himself and the Beggar on the Dunghil. But 'thas always been thought that in the doing of things, the validity or efficacy of which all depended on the Authority that they are vested with who did them, we are to look no further than to see whether they have such Authority or not. If therefore Christ has given to some in his Church Authority to make Disciples, to Teach and Minister in Holy Things: 'Tis very weak
and

and trifling to argue against such a Grant, because God is no respecter of Persons.

Thus then it is plain, that in the Christian Church there are Governors and Governed ; and that therefore they who are the present Pastors and Ministers of Christ's Church, do not usurp and lord it over their Brethren, by exercising that Power and Authority they are invested with. If indeed any of the Order have laid claim to more Power and Authority than is their due they are to be blam'd. But 'tis not just to charge the Office it self with the Mistakes and Faults of some particular Persons that belong to it. But,

Secondly, It has been urg'd, that the Clergy are a *self-interested designing* Body of Men, and have invented Doctrines for their own Advantage. But to this 'tis easie to reply, That if to accuse be sufficient to make Men guilty, 'twon't be very easie to find any innocent. 'Tis true indeed, there is a Revenue established by Law for the Encouragement and Maintenance of the Ministers of this Church. And is it not reasonable that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel ? 'Tis well known, that as things are now when we have not the *gift of Miracles*, nor *diversities of Tongues*, Men can't be qualified for the discharge of the Office of a Minister without a great deal of Labour, Time and Expence. And who is there that goes a Warfare at his own Charge ? Since we do not freely receive, is it reasonable that we should freely give ? Have not Publick Ministers their Salaries and Pensions ?

Do not the Learned Judges of the Law receive an Honourable Allowance and Maintenance? And why should what the Ministers of Religion have allowed them for their Encouragement and Maintenance, be thought worse of? Or, why should they alone be represented as *biass'd by their Preferments, and espousing Opinions right or wrong, on account of those being annex'd to them?* Are the great Officers of the Crown thought the worse of on account of the Profits belonging to their Places? Are the Honourable Judges suspected to be *biass'd by their Salary, and to take up their Opinions right or wrong, on account of that's being annexed to their Places?* If they are not, must it not be reckon'd very *partial* as well as *abusive* thus to charge and accuse those who Minister in Holy Things?

'Tis certain, that the Law of the Land by which these Encouragements are settled, have quite another Opinion of them. That instead of *biassing* the Clergy they serve to keep them *uncorrupted*, by placing them above the Temptation of being oblig'd to flatter the Vices, and Prophesie smooth things of the follies of Wicked and Impious Men. It observes very justly, * That *the Clergy's depending for their necessary Maintenance upon the Good Will and Likening of their Hearers, have been and are thereby under Temptation of too much complying, and suit-*

* Vid. preamble to the Act for making more effectual Her Majesty's gracious Intentions for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the poor Clergy, &c.

ing their Doctrines and Teaching to the Humours,
rather than the good of their Hearers.

But wherein have the Clergy shewn themselves so interested, and designing a body of Men? Have they gain'd any thing to the Revenue of the Church more than of Right anciently belong'd to it? So far from that, that many Instances can be produc'd of Parish Churches, by the easiness of former Incumbents, so lessen'd in their Incomes, as to be reduc'd from their being a competent Maintenance, to their not affording a bare Subsistence. Have the Clergy used any *extraordinary* ways of Gain? Do they not content themselves with the Fees allow'd them by the Law, tho' very small, and can it be shewn, that they have ever attempted to exact and demand greater?

It has been lately indeed in a publick manner insinuated, that the Clergy in the *tenderest Seasons* inculcate to the People a regard for them; as if we took advantage of People's Weakness and Sickness, to promote our own Interest, and carry on our selfish Designs. But 'tis very plain and manifest, that the Clergy of this Church have been so far from *forcing* themselves on People when they've been Sick, as that they've been accused as rather too remiss in making visits at that time. And I believe it will be found upon enquiry, that excepting the poorer sort, who are often thro' Fear and Bashfulness, hindred from sending for the Minister, 'tis very rare for the Clergy to visit any sick Person without being first sent for: And 'tis but too true that we seldom are sent for, till all other Matters are settled, and that the sick Person is just ready to depart. We are indeed order'd where there's room and
oppor-

opportunity for it, * *to move such sick Persons as are of Ability, to be liberal to the Poor.* But besides that as matters are commonly managed, there's seldom an Opportunity for making any such Exhortations: Our Adversaries will, I believe, be hard put to it to produce so much as one single Instance of any endeavours us'd, in the times of People's Sickness, to get any thing either for our selves, or for the Church of which we are Ministers. So far from that, that 'tis the general Practice of the Clergy of this Church to refuse taking any thing when offer'd for their Attendance on the Sick.

On the whole, every unprejudic'd Person, must surely think the Clergy of this Church very unfairly dealt with, in being accused of minding their Interest so much, and being so very selfish; Since 'tis well known that, † near one third of the Parish Churches in this Kingdom don't exceed the value of *Thirty Pounds a Year.* An Income that is not grudg'd to even the meanest Mechanick and day Labourer, and a better than which, even our *Education alone* may fairly entitle us to.

But because we won't *bold the Truth in Unrighteousness*, but will *earnestly contend for the Faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints*, or Christian Church; for that we won't betray and give up those Mysteries of God of which we are appointed the Stewards: Therefore are our Bishops represented as the *Great Pensioners of the World*; and the whole body of the Clergy, as those who are *under Awes and Bribes*, and *byass'd by our Hopes and Fears*; and

* Vid. Rubrick in the Visitat. of the sick. † Vid. *A just and Impartial Character of the Clergy*, &c. London, 1704.
that

that the *Doctrines* we teach are the more to be questioned and suspected because they are ours.

But 'tis said, That the Clergy have invented Doctrines to advance their own Interest. The Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are mention'd as Instances. But it deserves to be shewn what particular Interest the Clergy can have in teaching these Doctrines, more than other Christians. Is it that we increase our Authority, and add to our Reputation by them; as if we knew and understood more than others? This cannot truly be said, since we profess to teach no other Doctrine than what the *Holy Scriptures* contain, and they are in every body's Hands to consult and peruse. And accordingly the People are press'd and exhorted to search the Scriptures, and to see whether the things we teach are so or no, * *we handle not the Word of God deceitfully, we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God speak we in Christ.*

Thirdly, The Clergy of this Church have been defamed, by being represented as Enemies to the Liberty of the People, and the Preachers of Slavery and Arbitrary Power. And all because they have taught that Subjects are to be obedient to their Sovereigns, and not to resist and take up Arms to oppose their Authority. For 'tis not, so far as I know, so much as pretended that ever the Clergy in any of their Sermons have taught, that Princes might lawfully oppress their Subjects, and Tyrannize over their Bodies and Estates. Now, as 'thas been observ'd, one would think that this was a Doctrine that ought not

* 2 Cor. 4. 2. 2, 17.

to expose the Teachers of it to any more sufferings, than what they had oblig'd *themselves* to undergo.

Besides, it ought to be consider'd, how much this Nation had suffer'd, and how lately it was escaped from the Wreck it had endur'd by the People's Rebelling against their lawful Sovereign. And how natural it is for burnt Children to dread the Fire, and for Persons who had suffered so much by it, to do all they could to secure themselves, and their fellow Subjects from coming again into that state of Anarchy and Confusion, which they had so lately been delivered from.

Further, it was declared by the publick Authority of the Realm, * ' That by the undoubted and fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, ' neither the Peers of this Realm, nor the Commons, nor both together in Parliament, nor ' out of Parliament, nor the People collectively, ' or representatively, nor any other persons ' whatsoever, ever had, have, hath, or ought ' to have any Coercive power over the Kings ' of this Realm. † That both or either of the ' Houses of Parliament cannot, nor lawfully may ' raise or levy any War, Offensive or Defensive ' against the King, his Heirs or lawful Successors: That it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the ' King. Beyond these Declarations, I believe it will be found that the Clergy never went in any of their Sermons and Discourses: And 'tis not fair therefore to accuse us of injuring the Rights, and Liberties of our fellow Subjects, when we have

* 12 Car. 2. ca. 20. † 13. & 14. Car. 2. ca. 3.

said and affirm'd no more than is affirm'd by the Law of the Land.

Farther, 'tis a part of the Instructions given to those who are appointed to teach others, * *to put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates.* And in Obedience therefore to these Instructions, we think it our Duty to exhort those under our care to *be subject to the higher Powers, and not to resist but submit themselves, to every ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake.* If we have press'd this in general Terms, without making any *Exceptions*, or assigning any *Cases*, wherein it is lawful for Subjects to resist their Princes, and defend themselves, it ought to be attributed to this, that the Holy Scriptures, according to which we govern our selves, and from whence we take our Notions, have said nothing about such Cases, but are wholly Silent.

I only add that the Clergy of this Church have Rights and Liberties, as well as other Men, and are to be supposed as tender and careful of the Preservation of them. And 'tis therefore uncharitable to suppose, that they should *designedly* betray them and give them up. We are Flesh and Blood as well as our Neighbours, and can as ill bear the spoiling of our Goods, and being made Slaves as others. 'Tis indeed insinuated, that we shall be exempted from the common Fate of our fellow-Subjects, and be the better thought of by our Princes, for being the Instruments of the Enlargement of their Power, and maintaining their Sovereignty. But this can't be any inducement to Persons, that have

* Titus 3. 1. † Rom. 13. 1. Pet. 2. 13.

any sense of Humanity, to raise themselves upon the ruin of others, and to enlarge their own Privileges at the Expence of lessening those that belong to other People. Besides, that the Clergy of this Kingdom have Families of their own, and it can't but damp their joy amidst the Favours, and caresses bestow'd on their own Persons, to think what a Condition their Posterity will be in. Were we indeed single and independent, there might then be something in the Suggestion; But as we are incorporated into the State, and have Relations and Dependants, it must be very unnatural and cruel to help to make them Slaves, and contribute to their Oppression.

Lastly, It has been objected in order to defame the Clergy of this Church, that they are utterly against a Toleration of those that differ from them in matters of Religion, and are of a fierce and a persecuting Spirit. But we may venture to challenge our Adversaries, to produce any publick Act, or Declaration of the Clergy of this Church, approving of any Force or Severity to be used in matters of Religion, or intimating that 'tis lawful to punish Men with civil Mulcts or Penalties, for not conforming to the Laws and Customs of this Church. But because we have, as we think our selves in Conscience oblig'd to do, exhorted our Hearers to *keep the Unity of the Spirit*; because we endeavour to shew the great Danger, and sinfulness of Schism and Separation: Because we think that they who can *occasionally* communicate with that *part* of the *Christian Church*, in which Providence has plac'd them, may, nay ought to do so *always*; therefore are we represented as Enemies to a *Toleration*, and

of a cruel, and bigotted Spirit: Tho' if we were so it little becomes those who complain of us, to upbraid us with being so. Witness their fierce Rage against us, and their cruel Mockings, and unreasonable Insultings of us, as if we were the Filth of the World, the Offscouring of all Things.

But to conclude, Be perswaded not to hearken to these Scoffers, nor too easily to believe the hard and unreasonable Speeches of these gainsayers. Remember that 'tis your concern as well as ours, that we should be respected and well receiv'd ; since we are the * *Savour of Life unto Life, or of Death unto Death.* Besides, that 'tis one of the Commands of Him whose Name you are called by, to *† esteem those highly in Love that labour in the Word and Doctrine, for their Works sake.* And he has assur'd you, that || they who *despise* His Ministers ; He shall reckon the Affront as offer'd to Himself.

We don't indeed pretend to deny, but that as our Treasure is committed to us in Earthen Vessels, we are liable to Faults and Imperfections, we have our Passions and Infirmities, as well as others: But were our Faults and Defects greater than they are, they who defame and vilifie us are the least qualified to throw Dirt at us. Their Graces are not more illustrious, nor their Vertue and Goodness more conspicuous.

We don't therefore desire that you wou'd *fight our Battels*, as the *Laity* have been lately represented as *always ready to do.* We desire not to engage you in any of our private

* 2 Cor. 2. 16. † 1 Thess. 5. 13. || Luke 10. 16.

and personal Disputes. If any of us have done ill, the Law is open, nor do we desire to be justified and protected. But we think it your Duty as Christians, not to be *asham'd of the Gospel of Christ*, nor to be unwilling to vindicate and magnifie the Office of those who preach it, so long as we claim no more Power than *that* gives us ; nor don't refuse to be govern'd by the Instructions there laid down : We are oblig'd to let you know that we are to be respected as the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God* so long as we are found *faithful*.

Let us all then learn to *know* them who labour amongst us and admonish us. Let us respect their Persons, regard their Instructions, and magnifie their Office. If any of those who Minister in Holy Things act unworthy of their Holy Character and Calling, let us not charge the Office with the faults of the Men But rather if any one be overtaken with a Fault, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering your selves lest you also be tempted. To conclude all, Let us pray in the Words of this Church, ' That the Christian Church may always be ordered, and guided by faithful and true Pastors, who may constantly speak the Truth, boldly rebuke Vice, and patiently suffer for the Truth's sake, and that we may be joined together in Unity of Spirit by their Doctrine, that we may be made an Holy Temple acceptable unto God, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



F I N I S.